Cincinnati Post
Aug 13, 1975

New investigation of RFK killing seems a certainty

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — The county of Los Angeles has taken action which almost guarantees a new investigation into the 1968 assassination of Robert Kennedy.

The Board of Supervisors, in a 5-0 vote, yesterday instructed the county counsel to support a suit to determine whether Sirhan Sirhan acted alone or whether there was a "second gun" used in the senator's death.

IT ALSO REQUESTED that the district attorney's office, which secured Sirhan's conviction for murder, to accede to re-examination of the ballistics evidence introduced at the 1969 trial.

Acting District Attorney John Howard agreed. But he said his office had no doubt that Sirhan was guilty and that the verdict which resulted in life imprisonment for the young Palestinian immigrant was just.

"It is in the public interest to get this entire matter out in the open once and for all," supervisor Kenneth Hahn said.

"WAS THERE A conspiracy? Was the CIA involved? Was there a person other than Sirhan involved? Those are questions that need answering," Hahn said.

At his trial, Sirhan never denied he killed Kennedy. The prosecution produced a dozen witnesses who said they saw Sirhan firing a pistol into Kennedy's body at point-blank range in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

But the "second gun" theory has been advanced with increasing intensity recently on arguments that bullets removed from Kennedy's body did not match those which wounded other persons standing nearby.

There also have been claims that, although Sirhan's gun could hold only seven bullets, there was evidence that more than seven shots were fired.

IN A SUIT to be heard tomorrow in Los Angeles Superior Court, Paul Schrade, a United Auto Workers who was at Kennedy's side and who was injured in the shooting, has asked for a reopening of the case.

Schrade has demanded that the pistol wrested from Sirhan's hand be refired, that the bullets be compared with those taken from Kennedy's body and that other ballistics evidence be reviewed.

Howard, who was one of the prosecutors in the case, said no "simple" answers could be expected to produce a "solution to the case."

He said the inside of the barrel of the gun may have become corroded in the seven years that have passed and that there was a question of whether the bullet fragments had been improperly handled since the trial.

GRANT COOPER, CHIEF of Sirhan's staff of defense attorneys at the trial, said if there had been any glimmer pointing to a second gunman both he and the prosecution would have followed it up.

"There was no suggestion of CIA involvement," Cooper said today. "There was no suggestion of conspiracy.

"In cases like this which receive such tremendous publicity there are always persons who, for one reason or another, try to raise suspicions. But if a new investigation will clear the atmosphere, then I support it."